



STATE OF IOWA

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
CHUCK GIPP, DIRECTOR

MEMO

TO: Carmine Boal, Chief Clerk of the House

Michael Marshall, Secretary of the Senate

Ronald Parker, Senate Democratic Caucus Staff Director

Eric Johansen, Senate Republican Caucus Staff Director

Joseph Romano, House Democratic Caucus Staff Director

Jeffrey Mitchell, House Republican Caucus Staff Director

Julie Vande Hoef, Governor's Office

FROM: Chuck Gipp, Director, Dept. of Natural Resources

Cc: Sharon Tahtinen, Legislative Liaison, Dept. of Natural Resources

William Ehm, Admin., Environmental Services Div., Dept. of Natural Resources

DATE:

RE: Report on Mercury Thermostat Recycling

I am pleased to provide this status report on the implementation of the Mercury Thermostat Recycling Program as required by Iowa Code 455D.16.

The purpose of Iowa code 455D.16 is to stop the sale and installation of mercury-added thermostats and require manufacturers of mercury-added thermostats to collect and recycle as many mercury-added thermostats as reasonably practicable. To ensure success of the program, the legislation directed the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to submit an annual report to the General Assembly regarding the collection and recycling of mercury-added thermostats in the state.

Status of the Mercury Thermostat Recycling Program¹

The Thermostat Recycling Corporation (TRC) is acting on behalf of 30 manufacturers representing 104 brands. TRC has 94 collection locations in Iowa, 24 of those are Regional Collection Centers for household hazardous waste, 63 are wholesalers or distributors and six are contractors. There is also one demolition company participating in the program. The program collected 3479 mercury thermostats containing 26.52 pounds of mercury in 2013 and has collected 125.69 pounds of mercury since the beginning of the legislated program.

¹ This data is based on reports submitted by thermostat manufacturers for the calendar year 2013. Reports for 2014 are due to the DNR April 1, 2015.

Actual Collection Rates

The collection rate is the number of thermostats collected, divided by the number available for collection, expressed as a percentage. Although the number of thermostats collected is available from the TRC report, the number of mercury containing thermostats available for recycling is not as easily obtainable. To determine this, one needs to know the number of thermostats removed each year and what percentage of those contain mercury. The DNR has been unable to reach an agreement with industry representatives on what the collection goals should be.

Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Thermostat Recycling Program

Although 2009 was the first year of the legislated program, TRC has been collecting mercury thermostats in Iowa since 1998. Figure 1 shows the number of thermostats collected by TRC each year. In 2013 the number of thermostats collected was up 20% from the previous year.

Figure 1:
Number of mercury-added thermostats collected in Iowa by year.

